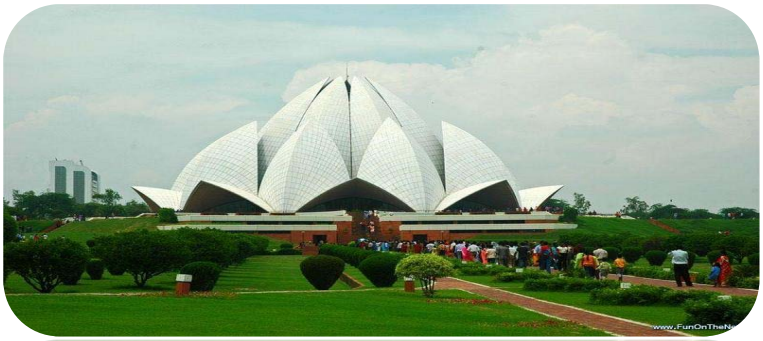
LIFE BLOOD

A Newsletter of Department of Treasury of National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is of India



From the Desk of the National Treasury

BUILT WITH SACRIFICE, LET US MAINTAIN IT WITH GENEROSITY AND LOVE!

When the construction work of the Baha'i House of Worship in Delhi was about to complete, an Indian Scholar who visited the Temple said, "The Taj Mahal was built with the power of a King, but you are building this majestic edifice with the power of love." More than 25 years have passed since then. Now the Temple has become world's one of the major attractions, drawing around 5 million visitors a year and become place of reverence as quoted by the Supreme Body.

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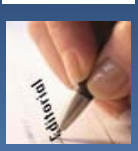

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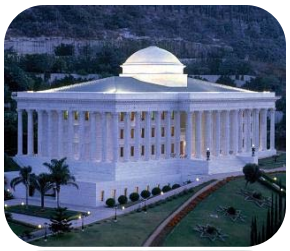
The Government of India has already declared Baha'i House of Worship as 'India's symbol of communal harmony'. The Temple has also been proposed for inclusion in the tentative list of World Heritage properties. Coming back to the history, it was a story of great sacrifice made by the believers to build up this House of Worship.



"Under the shadow of this magnificent edifice, millions who seek God have found tranquility and been uplifted by the songs of praise and exaltation that rise from its inner sanctum. The multitudes who have thronged its halls, from every corner of India and from nations across the globe have witnessed its power to harmonize the manifest diversity of its visitors, to awaken nobility in hearts, and to strengthen hope for peace" Universal House of Justice, in a letter written to National Spiritual Assembly of India.

As news of the Temple in India reached across the country and abroad, money started coming in from all over the world. Baha'is everywhere, from the largest cities to the remotest villages in far-flung corners of the globe, the rich and poor alike, contributed to build this edifice. Friends had collected even one rupee, a new bride gave her jewelry, a 6 year old girl donated her daily savings of ten paise, a villager offered all he had a 2 paise coin, those who had no money gave grains, etc.

This symbol of their Love -the Temple, is being maintained since then only with the generous and sacrificial contribution of the believers. Around Rs.3 crores is required every year for maintaining this House of Worship. Although the Indian Baha'i community has contributed a sum of Rs.3.65 crores during the last financial year towards National Fund, from which the partial expenses for Temple maintenance were also met, the ear-marked amount received for the Temple was only Rs.38.25 lakhs. We are happy that besides this amount, Rs.32.45 lakhs was contributed from friends outside the country. The major chunk of contribution towards National Fund (Temple Maintenance) came from Maharashtra (Rs.31.55 lakhs) followed by Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim.

This emphasizes the need for creating awareness among the believers and institutions in the country about the responsibility each individual believer is carrying , since they are, as the House of Justice once wrote, 'having the unique privilege as custodians of the Temple which continues to attract worldwide attention'. This Temple built with sacrifice can be maintained only with love, generosity and sacrifice. There is no other way. The concerted and sustained efforts of all Institutions appointed as well as elected, especially the Local Spiritual Assemblies and the Regional/State Baha'i Councils, are very much required to educate the believers on this important aspect. ***- P.K.Premarajan, National Treasurer***

National Spiritual Assembly Meets Mumbai Baha'i Community

Recently on 10th and 11th May National Assembly had its first meeting in Mumbai. In the evening of 10th May National Assembly met the Baha'i Community of Mumbai. Mr. Zia Eshraghi welcomed the members of National Assembly. The Chairman of the National Assembly acknowledged with deep appreciation MUMBAI community's sustained sacrificial support to the National Fund over the number of decades. He cited a few recent examples of how contribution from Mumbai Community helped National assembly to meet the precious needs of the Cause. There was a power point presentation made by the Treasurer of the National Assembly sharing with the community the level of contribution to various funds and the present needs of the fund in the context of the actual expenses. He also invited suggestions from the community to raise further the level of contribution as well as the number of contributors. Other members of the National Assembly also spoke a few words and appreciated with grateful thanks the role played by the community in not only making all their activities in the State self-sufficient but also acting as a pillar of National Fund. The programme ended with a lot of interaction and a community dinner thereafter, which provided individual believers to get to know firsthand information on this subject.

Editorial

Beloved friends,

Once again it's my pleasure to share with you an issue of LIFE BLOOD. The theme of this issue is Fund Education Programmes and we bring to you stories and news about a number of such devoted efforts dedicated in the path of Blessed Beauty to create the awareness among His followers about "the privilege of Contributing to the Baha'i Funds". Since we are called as "champion-builders of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh" it's our incumbent duty that we pause a little and reflect seriously upon the financial dimension of our responsibilities and I hope this Lifeblood will inspire you to do so.

Every day we hear stories of believers who find themselves "rich enough to dispense with all save Thee," who, giving generously from wages stretched by the accelerating costs of food, fuel, and other necessities, from small fixed incomes, and from precious savings, are proving, through their sacrifices, the strength of their devotion to Bahá'u'lláh's sacred Cause. Beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi says:

> "It is therefore imperative for the individual believer[s] . . . to step forward, and dedicate their resources, their time, their very lives to a Cause of such transcendence that no human eye can even dimly perceive its glory. Let them resolve, instantly and unhesitatingly, to place, each according to his circumstances, his share on the altar of Bahá'í sacrifice."

Time and again, the community of Blessed Beauty has shown itself capable of deeds of astonishing ingenuity and heroism.

Recently, the National Spiritual Assembly urged us to rise to a new level of sacrifice to achieve the financial goals for the National Bahá'í Fund. They reminded us of the high station conferred upon us by the Beloved Master, Ábdu'l- Bahá, in the Tablets of the Divine Plan assured us that with continual love and sacrifice we will rise to meet the needs of the "lifeblood of the Cause".

May the community of our beloved Blessed Beauty be ever confident and supportive of all our collective efforts to rise to this new level of sacrifice for our beloved Faith!

Regional/State Council Treasurers and Secretaries Attend National Level Training Workshop in New Delhi

On April 5th and 6th, treasurers and secretaries of various Regional and State Baha'i Councils attended a national level training workshop. The national Treasurer and the Secretary conducted this Workshop, guiding the respective office bearers in their day to day smooth functioning of the office of the Council and how to deal with the various responsibilities and challenges faced by them. The participants were also privileged to receive the precious guidance of the Counsellors Dr. Eidelkhani and Mr. Rajan Sawant.

Baha'i Fund Yatra: A SUCCESS STORY

In Tamilnadu and Pudduchery there are 14 IPG clusters and we had planned a Fund Yatra in Sivakasi, Viruthunagar and Tirunelveli clusters for three days with an aim to educate the friends on the importance of fund.

Preparation of this Yatra: As a preparation of this Yatra, we first organized the one day workshop on importance of fund for the assistant treasurers, in which some of the Local Spiritual Assembly members also participated. We studied and discussed some of the Writings on the importance of fund and the participants. A presentation of the current numerical information on number of friends contributing to the fund was made and the challenges faced in collecting the funds were consulted upon. After explaining various Funds such as Local Fund, State Branch of National Fund i.e. Council Fund, House of worship Fund etc, the pledges were collected indicating which Funds they would like to contribute to, its amount and frequency of contribution.

The assistant treasures were also trained to create awareness and expand this conversation based on the reality of the cluster friends and they were shared with some stories of the different kinds of contributors like low earners, middle earners, students, children and adults. They were also asked to work out an exercise for each of the cases for allotting the fund from their income. This was quite effective and fruitful to increase the capacity of the assistant treasures to guide, encourage and educate the friends for the contribution.

Fund Yatra: After this Workshop we had some home visits for encouraging the friends for the contribution and the visiting team discussed with the friends on Fund, Nineteen Day Feast, Holy Day celebration, the station of Local Spiritual Assembly, etc. Moreover the statistical data on the number of children, junior youths and youths was also collected and they were encouraged to participate in any of the educational activities like children classes, junior youth groups and study circles. The friends shared their own experiences on their contribution to the Fund and their growth in both material and spiritual life. Some of them felt that they have been facing so many challenges since they are not giving regularly to the fund.

We suggested friends to transfer contribution amount by sending money order or depositing in the RBC Bank account either directly or through assistant treasurers. During this yatra some of them gave their contributions totaling to Rs. 20,707 and also they gave their pledges for their regular contribution.

We felt that it would have been much better, if we had approached some friends in other cluster also. We realized that through such activities increasing awareness could be created about importance of contributing to the Baha'I Fund which is Lifeblood of the Faith.

After this Yatra, Mr. Paulraj, the assistant treasurer has been accompanying the friends and following up with them to ensure the regular flow of contributions.

A report by- Mr. Bharat, for Regional Baha'i Council of Tamilnadu and Pudduchery.

Fund Education Workshop held in Secunderabad

A two day Fund Education Workshop was held on 14th and 15th June 2014 at the Baha'i Bhavan, Secunderabad. The State Baha'i Council had organized this workshop for the friends working on various Institutions, including the assistants to the treasurer. Although the number of friends was relatively small, (about 15 participants) the heightened spirit of the participants and their enthusiasm had no bounds. Friends participated in discussion after the presentations on various aspects of the Baha'i Funds. Ms Shraddha Teli, from Fund Development Office of the National Assembly facilitated this Workshop and assisted the friends in deepening their understanding on importance of contributing to the Fund, it's a privilege for the Baha'is only and the contribution is a key to prosperity. It has to be voluntary, sacrificial, and regular and is considered to be the measure of one's Faith.

Friends were delighted in participating in planning process and presenting the action plan of how they would encourage others in creating the awareness of this vital subject.

Study Sessions held in Kakori and Lucknow

On 17th and 18th May 2014 Dr. Shirin Mahalati conducted a study session on Huququllah (right of God) at Kakori near Lucknow for which more than 50 friends attended. After the presentation in the question and answer session a number of queries were clarified. On 18th May in the evening she also addressed about 60 friends from Lucknow on the subject of Baha'i Fund: its importance as well as the privilege to contribute to the **LIFE BLOOD** of the Faith. Using the Power-point presentation prepared by the National Fund Development Office Dr. Mahalati clarified a number of salient features of this very important subject and urged the friends to increase the awareness among the fellow believers.

What is in the offing?

The State Baha'i Councils of Odisha and Manipur have planned their Fund education workshops in coming months and they have been provided different power point presentations on the subject of Fund education so that they can translate the material in respective languages and make the workshop more effective. We shall hear more about the same in the next issue of LIFE BLOOD.

Fund Conference 2014, Saputara-Gujarat

The Background: 5th Baha'i Fund Conference organized by the **State Baha'i Council of Gujarat** was held on 24th -25th May 2014 at Saputara, which was attended by about 140 friends from 10 clusters. Being always conscious of the nexus between the spiritual health of their community and their spirit of sacrifice to the Fund, the Council organized its first Fund Conference in the year 2009 with a theme **'I Support the Baha'i Fund'**. As a result, the friends collected Rs. 2, 41,630/- towards "National Fund-Gujarat Branch." Over the years their contribution towards all the funds started attaining new levels and during the year 2013-14, total contribution received by the Council has been Rs.12, 05,105/. This has been possible since besides Fund conference, the Council has been organizing 'Fund Yatra' at the cluster level as well as at community level, and this subject is regularly discussed in the Baha'i newsletter too.

Highlights of the Conference: The 5th Fund Conference in this series started with prayers and warm welcome to the friends which was followed by release of their first ever dedicated Newsletter "*Baha'i Kosh-Samruddhi Ni Chavi'*(*Baha'i Fund: A Key to Prosperity'*) in Guajarati, prepared by the treasury department of the Council. It was released in the presence of dear Counsellor Rajan Sawant, Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly Dr. Mangesh Teli and a number of friends. Then spoke Mr. Prashant Chinubhai on the subject of Sacrifice and gave examples from early history of the Faith. He said that our spiritual ancestors have set an example of true sacrifice, and now it is our turn, our privilege to offer our material wealth for the Cause of God. After that Counsellor Rajan Sawant helped the friends to understand how the three level educational processes are assisting us in establishing the Divine Civilization in clusters, especially in Villages and Neighborhoods. He said that contributing towards Baha'i Fund is a kind of the service which every believer can offer. The Baha'i community is experiencing cultural changes, including deepening methods. Today we have learnt to invite and involve the seekers in the Process of Growth and our activities have increased many fold, and the financial need of these activities demand for more funds. He also reminded the friends that the Baha'i community has acquired the capacity to mobilize large number of youths in

the field of service through the youth conferences organized worldwide during the last year. He said that our understanding about many Baha'i concepts, including regularity and generosity regarding Baha'i Fund has increased during several years.

Dr. Mangesh Teli's power point presentation prepared by NSA's Fund Development Office, on the *Baha'i Fund- a Privilege Open to the Believers only'* helped the friends to understand important concepts related to the Baha'i Fund. It contained the detailed information about the National Fund and how it is being spent for. He said that the National Assembly is still dependent on the World Centre to meet their some of the expenses related to the House of Worship whereas the Universal House of Justice trusts that the Indian Baha'i community is capable to raise the Funds to meet the total expenses and thus it is for the friends to rise to this occasion to make sacrificial contribution. Expressing joy and happiness on self-sufficiency of Gujarat Council, Mr. Jaya Puhran shared some of the inspiring stories about the Baha'i Fund and how the friends who contributed became prosperous over the years. The Treasurer of the Council, Mr. Rajesh Ahire presented the financial reports and appealed for pledges towards National Fund. The Council received pledges for Rs. 8, 98,352/ towards National Fund from around 125 believers. After that an open discussion was held on 'How to educate Baha'i children and youth about the Baha'i Fund right from an early age.

On second day Dr. Anis spoke on 'Living the Life' using quotations from the Baha'i Holy Writings' which followed Mr. Mahesh Lakhwani who explained about the Law of Huququllah The friends then enjoyed a lot with great interest the power point presentation on 'Baha'i Marriage and Family Life' presented by Dr. Mangesh Teli. He tried to help the friends to understand the purpose of marriage, loyalty, mystery behind the consent of parents and what should one look for in his/her future life partner. Counsellor Rajan Sawant helped friends to draw understanding from the Ridvan 2014 Message. He said that this Message explores the concepts of spirituality, accompaniment, devotional meeting, etc. It enriches us to converse with others about the growth process. Mr. Vasant Bagul, Secretary of the Council thanked all the believers in Gujarat for their regular and sacrificial contributions and encouraged them to reflect on regularity, generosity, spirit of sacrifice. At the end, the Treasurer announced that the conference was self sufficient and thanked all the participants.

As reported by: **Mr.Vasant Bagul and Rajesh Ahire,** State Baha'i Council of Gujarat

Consultative Gathering on Fund Education held in Kolkata

The State Baha'i Council of West Bengal organized a Consultative Gathering on Baha'i Fund Education, on 12th and 13th April 2014 at Kolkata Baha'i Centre. This gathering was attended by approximately 30 friends consisting of the members of the Auxiliary Board, State Baha'i Council, and Training Institute Board, assistants to the Treasurer, Local Assembly Treasurers, Sub regional coordinators and facilitators, fund development officer of West Bengal, etc.

We discussed about various aspects of Baha'i Fund with the help of four power point presentations made by the National Fund Development Officer Ms. Shraddha Teli on subjects like "Importance of Fund", "Educating the Believers & creating avenues", "National Fund and Self-sufficiency" and "Role of Treasurer, Asst. Treasurer & Fund Development Officer". Many believers expressed that the gathering was successful beyond their imagination, for it was first time they came to know in depth many deeper aspects of contributing to the Baha'i Fund, which hitherto they did not know.

The participants were divided into five groups and consulted upon their action plan for fund education in their respected clusters. These plans were realistic as well as detail not leaving any opportunity to educate the friends and raise their understanding on this subject.

Reported by: Mr. Saiyed Ali, Treasurer, State Baha'i Council, West Bengal

Feedback on Consultative Gathering

Dear Friends, subsequent to the Fund Education Consultative Gathering held in West Bengal at Kolkata, the Treasurer of the West Bengal State Council Reports:

"I am very glad to inform you the latest number of contributors to various Funds in our State. Some contributors are first time contributing to the funds like Deputisation and International fund.

National Fund (State Branch):**37**; National Fund General: **3**; Temple Maintenance Fund: **7;** International Fund: **5**; Deputization Fund: **2**

Assistant to Treasurer Mr. Amir Soehl from **KAMARHATTY CLUSTER** while explaining the plan of fund Education says that 30 friends out of 35 are contributing to the various Funds though not regularly. He suggests that Nineteen Day Feast, Holy Days, Reflection gatherings and Devotional meetings will be used to study a few quotations relating to Fund education and sacrifice to encourage universal participation.

Siddinath Naskar, Assistant to Treasurer from Diamond Harbour cluster says, 'We now know that, contribution to Baha'i Fund helps Baha'i Administration to run their work without any problem. Before this we didn't know that we could earn blessings of God by contributing to the Fund. .....If we do not contribute we cannot become prosperous."

Sukumar Kirtania, Treasurer Patra LSA says that at present, out of 15 friends, 8 friends contribute to Local Fund and 6 friends contribute to National Fund. Considering himself to be fortunate to attend this Gathering on Fund, he emphasized that he will make concerted efforts in creating awareness among the fellow believers in his cluster.

Friends from **Kharagpur Cluster** said, "We will raise the point of contribution to the Funds on various occasions, so that we can get universal participation. We will try to make the friends understand that contribution to the Fund is a blessed act which will enrich us both spiritually and materially".

Pradip Mahato, from **Hura Cluster**, writes that he will consistently keep educating the friends at various occasions, including the Home visits on importance of contributing to the Fund, which is Lifeblood of the Faith.

Prasanta Kumbhakar, Asst. to Treasurer, Indpur Cluster has also drawn out similar plan for fund education in his area. Friends from **Joypur Cluster** have decided to make every single activity self-sufficient, in order to lessen the burden on the Fund.

Orientation programme on Fund Education held at Cochin

An orientation programme on Fund Education and Development was facilitated by the National Treasurer at Cochin (Kerala) Baha'i Centre on 29th June 2014, in which 19 friends from different parts of the State participated. Participants included members (including Treasurer) of the State Baha'i Council, Training Institute Board, State Fund Development Officer, Assistants to State Treasurer, Treasurers of Cluster Growth Committees/Local Spiritual Assemblies, etc. There was an in depth study on the importance of contributing to Baha'i Funds and the need for Fund Education. Roles of various functionaries handling funds and responsible for Fund Education were also explained in detail.

Dates for 9 Cluster-level Fund Development gatherings during July and August 2014 and the team members for facilitating the programme were also fixed at the conference. Mr. Premarajan has promised to prepare a material in Malayalam for this purpose.

** This newsletter is for limited circulation, only for the Baha'is, and is edited by Ms. Shraddha Teli and published on behalf of Department of Treasury, National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of India*

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